

2002 YEAR IN REVIEW

Liberty Wing receives high marks, makes history during eventful year

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48TH FIGHTER WING PUBLIC AFFAIRS

As a new year approaches, the 48th Fighter Wing reflects upon another successful year. From high marks for the wing during the July NATO strike evaluation, to "high marks" for Lakenheath High School's principal William Diesselhorst, selected as 2001 Department of Defense Education Activity Principal of the year, Team Liberty produced a number of memorable highlights that added to the wing's long and distinguished history.

"This has been a fantastic year for the wing," said Brig. Gen. John T. Brennan, 48th FW commander. "Team Liberty warriors have made many great contributions to our community, our command and our nation this year."

This year's highlights had several mission and operational milestones, including two NATO strike evaluations to test the wing's ability to perform this mission in a wartime posture, a joint U.S. Air Forces in Europe and Defense Threat Reduction Agency surety inspection, and several tactical evaluation exercises. In addition, more than 1,100 Liberty Warriors deployed worldwide in major deployments to more than 22 locations to support a variety of Air and Space Expeditionary Force requirements.

Many of our air and support crews took part in exercises such as Combat Archer at Tyndall Air Force Base, Fla., to test their air-to-air weapon capabilities and

Combat Hammer at Eglin AFB, Fla., to test the F-15E air-to-ground tactics and weapons employment. The wing also deployed to exotic places like Konya, Turkey, and Moron, Spain. A major aviation milestone was hit as the 493rd Fighter Squadron lit up the record books by completing 100 sorties in 12.5 hours – more than any other F-15 squadron has flown here in a single day.

While the wing was busy performing the mission, there were many Team Liberty members and 48th FW organizations honored with Air Force and USAFE-level awards for their contributions to the mission, to sports and to the community.

This year, our numbered Air Force had a change in leadership, as Maj. Gen. Michael W. Wooley took command of 3rd Air Force, replacing Maj. Gen. Kenneth Hess. This was followed by a British milestone, in the celebration of the Queen's Golden Jubilee, marking the 50th anniversary of Her majesty Queen Elizabeth's accession to the throne. Team Liberty members joined the special occasion, including participating in events from Brandon to Newmarket.

The big community news was the opening of the long-awaited new shoppette, gas station and Taco Bell restaurant in August.

The biggest change of the year came in September when the wing transformed with the rest of the Air Force into a more effective combat wing organization.

"The wing transformation was a monumental wing-wide effort," said Lt. Col. James

Dickerson, 48th FW director of staff. "This new formation better aligns ourselves with the Air Force competencies."

While most people celebrated Thanksgiving at home with their loved ones, more than 220 Team Liberty warriors celebrated via long distance, as they deployed to 22 locations in Southwest Asia and Europe to support AEFs 7 and 8.

"Once again, it's our turn to bring our skill and knowledge to the fight," said Brennan.

As the holiday season approached in November, the wing received an early Christmas present. It came in big and fast in the form of two new F-15E Strike Eagles. The two new F-15s were flown by 494th FS pilots from the Boeing factory in St. Louis. As the two Strike Eagles arrived, several F-15Cs from the 493rd FS with a more sorties "under their belts" flew air combat patrols to assist in air defense over Prague, Czech Republic, during the NATO Summit.

"The outstanding men and women of the 48th FW enhanced NATO's ability to identify and prevent terrorist attacks against the summit by providing combat air patrols," said Gen. Gregory S. Martin, U.S. Air Forces in Europe commander.

The wing rounded out the year with the traditional base Christmas tree lighting and another tactical evaluation exercise that will launch the wing into next year's NATO tactical evaluation in March.

"Next year should be another great year," said Brennan, "as we continue to focus on our mission capabilities, our resourceful warriors and the Team Liberty family that make East Anglia a great place to work and live."

Aircrews from 492nd and 493rd Fighter Squadrons participate in live fire training during Combat Archer at Tyndall Air Force Base, Fla., Feb. 18 to March 1.

TIMELINE 2002



(Above) James Conklin's Lakenheath Elementary School fourth-grade class collected crafts for children in a Dutch camp.

JANUARY

Jan. 23 to 25 – Liberty Wing tests ability to perform its strike mission in a wartime posture during the NATO Strike Evaluation.

Liberty wing deploys 494th Fighter Squadron F-15E Strike Eagles and troops for Air and Aerospace Expeditionary Force 2 to Incirlik, Turkey.

FEBRUARY

Feb. 25 to 28 – 492nd Fighter Squadron participates in Combat Hammer exercise. Crews dropped precision-guided munitions on real targets while multiple video cameras captured the missions to provide real-time feedback on combat tactics and weapons employment.



MARCH

Liberty warriors install 28 new mission-critical information distribution systems in F-15E Strike Eagles, providing global situation awareness.

APRIL

Team liberty participates in a Mass Accident Response Exercise April 18, designed to prepare Team Lakenheath to respond to possible disasters.

